United Nations ST/AI/2010/9

Secretariat

16 July 2010

Administrative instruction

Rest and recuperation

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2009/4 and for the purpose of implementing section II, paragraph 30, of General Assembly resolution 63/250, promulgates the following:

Section 1
General provisions

Purpose and definitions

1.1 Staff members required to work for extended periods at duty stations under hazardous, stressful and difficult conditions shall be granted regular periods of rest and recuperation under the terms of the present instruction, in order to protect their health and well-being, and to ensure optimal work performance upon the resumption of their duties, while preserving the operational readiness of the Organization. The rest and recuperation scheme is designed for exceptional and extraordinary circumstances, and is not to be considered an element of compensation for the hardship level or security rating of a duty station. Rest and recuperation is a means by which staff members can take regular authorized time off to leave the designated duty station in order to be given a break from the dangerous, stressful, isolated working and living conditions under which they serve. The rest and recuperation scheme should not be considered an additional annual leave entitlement, a family reunification mechanism, or financial compensation.

1.2 (a) For the purposes of the present instruction, the United Nations peacekeeping and political missions (hereinafter referred to as missions) and other duty stations for which the entitlement to rest and recuperation has been approved are referred to as rest and recuperation designated duty stations;

(b) Rest and recuperation away from the rest and recuperation designated duty station means going to a duty station not so designated;

(c) An assignment is a staff movement to a department, office or mission, with or without a change in duty station, for a limited period of time, during which the releasing department or office remains responsible for reabsorbing the staff member.

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1.3 Rest and recuperation comprises seven working days, including two travel days, charged to special leave with full pay granted to eligible staff members under staff rule 5.3. To ensure that the purpose set out in section 1.1 above is achieved, rest and recuperation is granted automatically once the conditions set out in section 3 below have been met, in order to give staff time off at regular intervals for rest and recuperation away from the rest and recuperation designated duty station.

Eligibility

1.4 All staff members who have been internationally recruited as determined by the Staff Rules and staff members on assignment who have obtained international status by virtue of their assignment shall be eligible for rest and recuperation, provided they serve at duty stations designated for rest and recuperation purposes in accordance with section 2 below.

Section 2
Designation of duty stations for rest and recuperation purposes

2.1 Duty stations shall be designated for rest and recuperation purposes by the Office of Human Resources Management after consultation with the substantive department or departments represented at the duty station, the Department of Safety and Security, the staff representatives for internationally recruited personnel in the field and the field group of the Human Resources Network of the United Nations System Chiefs Executive Board for Coordination (CEB).

2.2 In the designation of a duty station for rest and recuperation purposes, the presence of extraordinary conditions that have an impact on the health, safety and well-being of staff members, including hardship, isolation, security considerations and hazardous conditions, all of which will normally be reflected in the hardship classification of duty stations undertaken by the International Civil Service Commission, shall be taken into account.

2.3 Such designation shall normally be made for a one-year period, and shall be subject to midyear and annual reviews. However, significant changes in the duty station environment may result in a determination in the course of the year that the duty station should, or should no longer, be designated for rest and recuperation purposes.

2.4 Staff members shall be informed[1] of the list of duty stations designated for rest and recuperation purposes, and of the effective date of that designation.

Effect of change in designation

2.5 Eligible staff members already present at a duty station newly designated for rest and recuperation purposes shall begin to accrue qualifying service as from the effective date of the designation.

2.6 Should a duty station cease to be designated for rest and recuperation purposes, staff members having served the applicable period of qualifying service as at the effective date of the cessation may take rest and recuperation within the

[1] The list of duty stations designated for rest and recuperation purposes is published in an information circular, on the United Nations intranet and on the website of the Office of Human Resources Management: http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/salaries_allowances.

following month, as provided in section 3.12 below. There shall be no prorating of rest and recuperation for any period shorter than the defined rest and recuperation period served before the effective date of the cessation.

Section 3
Rest and recuperation conditions

Frequency

3.1 (a) In order to achieve the purpose defined in section 1.1 above, rest and recuperation shall be granted after a period of qualifying service, which shall be 12 weeks unless otherwise decided in accordance with section 3.1 (b) below;

(b) Should particularly severe hardship conditions prevail at specific duty stations, the duration of the period of qualifying service may be reduced by the Office of Human Resources Management after consultation with the relevant department, the Department of Safety and Security, the staff representatives for internationally recruited personnel serving in the field and the field group of the Human Resources Network of CEB.

3.2 Rest and recuperation shall not be granted during the last month of service at the rest and recuperation designated duty station, subject to section 3.11 (c) below.

Qualifying service

3.3 In order to be considered as "qualifying" for rest and recuperation purposes, service at a rest and recuperation designated duty station must be uninterrupted. Qualifying service shall be interrupted by any of the following:

(a) Travel on official business outside the rest and recuperation designated duty station, including travel for training purposes, if the staff member takes additional annual or special leave in conjunction with official travel outside the rest and recuperation designated duty station;

(b) Absence from the duty station on family leave, family visit travel, home leave or sick leave, special leave or annual leave for more than three consecutive working days.

3.4 When qualifying service has been interrupted, such service accrued before the interruption shall be forfeited and a new period shall begin upon the return to duty by the staff member at the duty station designated for rest and recuperation purposes.

3.5 Qualifying service shall not be considered interrupted when a staff member is transferred or reassigned without a break from one rest and recuperation designated duty station to another. In such a case, qualifying service accrued at the first such duty station may be carried forward for the purpose of calculating qualifying service and used at the second such duty station.

3.6 The period of qualifying service shall run from the date of arrival of the staff member at the rest and recuperation designated duty station, or from the date of return to such a duty station after an interruption of qualifying service, or from the date of return to such a duty station after an absence on rest and recuperation.

Duration of rest and recuperation absence from the designated duty station, and combination with other types of authorized absence

3.7 Rest and recuperation is granted for seven working days, including five working days for rest and recuperation, one working day for travel on the outward journey and one working day for travel on the return journey. In cases in which staff members serve in remote locations requiring considerable travel to the closest airport in order to depart for rest and recuperation, the administration may authorize additional working day(s) for the actual day(s) travelled within the rest and recuperation designated duty station on the outward and/or return journey. Where additional travel days for local travel within the rest and recuperation designated duty station are granted, the administration shall record, and report to the responsible department or office at Headquarters on, the reasons for the granting of additional travel days to the staff member concerned.

3.8 Only at the staff member's express request can rest and recuperation be taken for fewer than the normal seven working days.

3.9 Subject to exigencies of service, rest and recuperation may be taken in conjunction with the following:

(a) Official holidays;

(b) Annual leave, except when such leave is taken for home leave or family visit travel as provided in section 3.11 (a) below. Where rest and recuperation is combined with annual leave, any illness occurring during the period of annual leave shall be subject to the provisions of staff rule 6.2 (e);

(c) Sick leave, subject to appropriate medical certification;

(d) Travel on official business, subject to the relevant staff rules.

When staff members are permitted to combine rest and recuperation with travel on official business for their personal convenience, any additional costs above the normal entitlement in respect of the official business travel shall be borne by the staff member. The Organization shall not be responsible for any additional expenses or liabilities that may be incurred as a result of combining rest and recuperation with travel on official business, including any costs incurred in connection with delays, ticket changes, cancellations or fare increases.

3.10 The maximum absence from the rest and recuperation designated duty station for each rest and recuperation period shall not exceed 12 calendar days, including weekends and official holidays, unless rest and recuperation is combined with annual leave, sick leave or travel on official business as provided in section 3.9 above. However, additional working days for local travel within the rest and recuperation designated duty station authorized under section 3.7 above shall not be taken into account in determining the maximum number of days of absence allowed for rest and recuperation.

3.11 Rest and recuperation may not be combined with any of the following:

(a) Travel on home leave, family visit or return travel in relation to an education grant. Should such a combination occur after the approval or commencement of rest and recuperation, all days previously authorized as rest and recuperation shall be charged to annual leave;

(b) Maternity leave, paternity leave or uncertified sick leave. Should such a combination occur after the approval or commencement of rest and recuperation, all days previously authorized as rest and recuperation shall be charged to annual leave or other leave, as appropriate;

(c) Travel on departure from the rest and recuperation designated duty station at the end of the staff member's appointment or assignment, unless the staff member is transferred or reassigned without a break to another duty station designated for rest and recuperation purposes under section 2 above. In that case, the staff member may take rest and recuperation for a period not exceeding seven working days, including two travel days, with a maximum period of absence of 12 calendar days, as provided in section 3.10 above. A longer period of absence shall result in the charging to annual leave of all days previously authorized for rest and recuperation purposes.

Timing of rest and recuperation

3.12 In order to achieve its purpose, rest and recuperation must be taken within one month following the completion of the period of qualifying service and shall be forfeited if the staff member elects not to take it within the prescribed period. Should exigencies of service, as determined by the head of administration or mission support at the rest and recuperation designated duty station, make it impossible for a staff member to take rest and recuperation within that period, it may be taken during the following month on an exceptional basis, after which the entitlement to rest and recuperation for the particular qualifying period shall no longer exist.

3.13 Rest and recuperation may not be carried forward from one qualifying period to the next or combined with subsequent rest and recuperation.

3.14 In view of the strict constraints on the times during which rest and recuperation may be taken, each rest and recuperation designated duty station is required to plan the allocation of its human resources accordingly. In particular, each such duty station shall make the arrangements necessary to ensure that:

(a) Staff members are able to avail themselves, at the appropriate intervals, of their rest and recuperation and annual leave entitlements;

(b) The office is appropriately covered within existing resources during the period of the staff member's absence on rest and recuperation.

Location of rest and recuperation

3.15 Rest and recuperation shall be taken outside the duty station designated for rest and recuperation purposes.

Relationship of rest and recuperation with other entitlements

3.16 Staff members shall have full-pay status while on rest and recuperation. Entitlement to mission subsistence allowance, where applicable, for the period shall be subject to the provisions of ST/AI/1997/6 and Amend.1. Regardless of whether transport is provided by the United Nations, daily subsistence allowance is not applicable while the staff member is on rest and recuperation.

3.17 Rest and recuperation does not affect the periodicity or accrual of any other travel or leave entitlement. However, travel on home leave or family visit travel shall not be authorized until at least one month after a return from rest and recuperation.

3.18 Costs incurred when travelling on rest and recuperation shall be the exclusive responsibility of the staff member. However, in those areas where the United Nations has means of transport arranged for official purposes, every effort shall be made to facilitate the use of such transport by staff members leaving or returning to the rest and recuperation designated duty station, at no cost or minimal cost, on a "non-interference, space available basis".[2] As provided in paragraph 3.9 (d) above, rest and recuperation may be combined with travel on official business.

3.19 No overtime or compensatory time off shall be granted for internationally recruited staff at rest and recuperation designated duty stations.

Section 4
Final provisions

4.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

4.2 Administrative instructions ST/AI/2000/21 and ST/AI/2004/6 and Corr.1 are hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Angela **Kane**
Under-Secretary-General for Management

[2] "Non-interference, space available basis" means that staff travelling on rest and recuperation may use United Nations aircraft provided their travel does not interfere with the operational priorities for passengers as established by the Secretary-General, and provided there is space available to accommodate the individual.